

# A Happy and Healthy New Year

**Newport Philatelic Society**

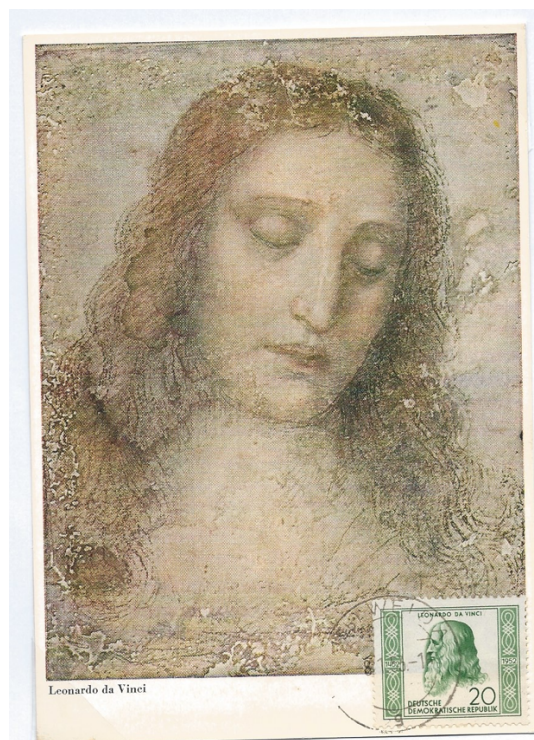
<https://newportgwentphilatelic.weebly.com/>

## **Newsletter 25th Release: Number 85 January 2021**

### **Introduction:**

I wish you all a happy and healthy New Year. With vaccination making slow progress through the community, I know that some members have already received their first injection, hopefully things will gradually get better. However, we must keep safe and be careful but hopefully we can now start to look forward to better times later in 2021. At the start of 2021 we have arrived at the 25<sup>th</sup> issue of this newsletter, I never imagined we would hit this milestone and thank you to all of the contributors who have made it possible. In this issue we have some Christmas Island covers from Roy and some news from a recent virtual meeting of the committee including the start-up of zoom meetings to increase our communication with the members.

As always, I am looking for newsletter contributions from all members, if you have something to share or would like any help sending in a picture(s) of some of your interesting stamps or covers please let me know as I would be glad to help. Here is a recent maximum card from the DDR which I added to my collection.



## Christmas island Covers: Roy

### GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS CHRISTMAS ISLAND LOCAL ISSUE.

Central Pacific Mail Boat Service

Cocoanut Plantation Issues.



This cover has the fourth and final printing of the local stamp which was issued in December 1934. The stamp is identified by the colour change red to blue on the surcharge 10 cents value.



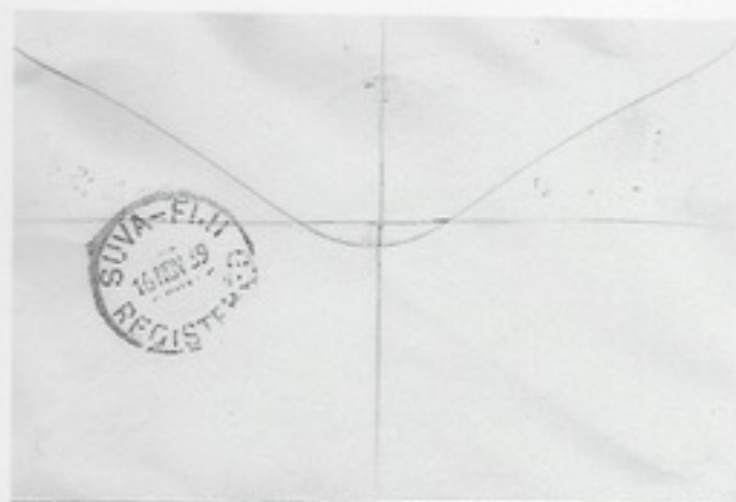
This cover cancelled 25<sup>th</sup> December 1936 Christmas Island also has French stamp and cancellation for Tahiti on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 1937.

**THE GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS**  
**POSTAL HISTORY**  
**CHRISTMAS ISLAND Registered Mail**



16th September 1939

Boxed Registered Cancellation.



Back cancelled Fiji 19th November 1939

Mail from Christmas Island was shipped out to Fiji then flown to Australia.

## THE GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS

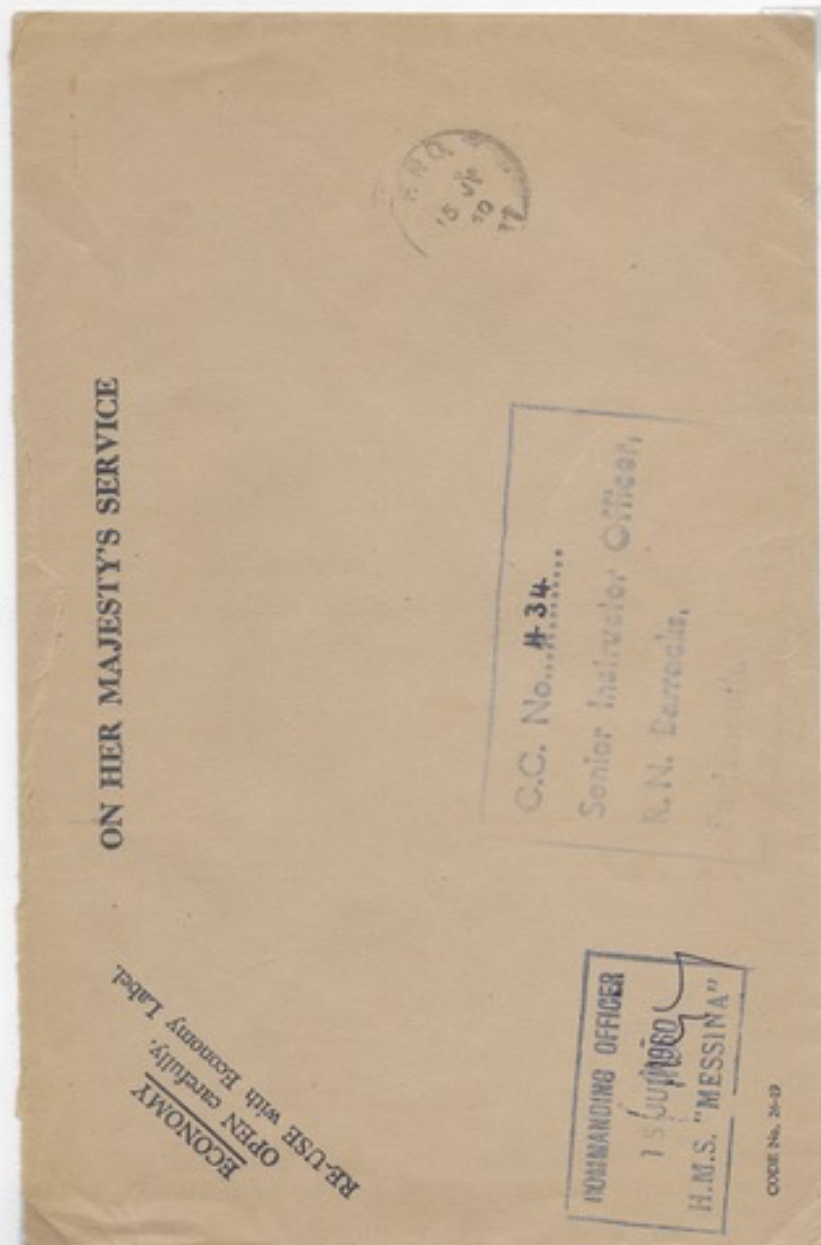
### POSTAL HISTORY

#### CHRISTMAS ISLAND ATOM BOMB TESTS

#### BRITISH FORCES

H.M.S. Messina arrived in Christmas Island in August 1956; as headquarters for the Senior Naval Officer. She had been fitted out to make up to 100 tons of fresh water per day. She had also been fitted out with a special wireless transmitter to enable her to act as the main link between Christmas Island and London. Messina had also been used to transport all the plant and heavy equipment on Malden Island, using her own LCMs and DUKWs to land them.

This letter posted on board carries the ships cancel for the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1960.  
Note the OHMS Economy letter for Re-Use with paper still in short supply 15 years after WW11.



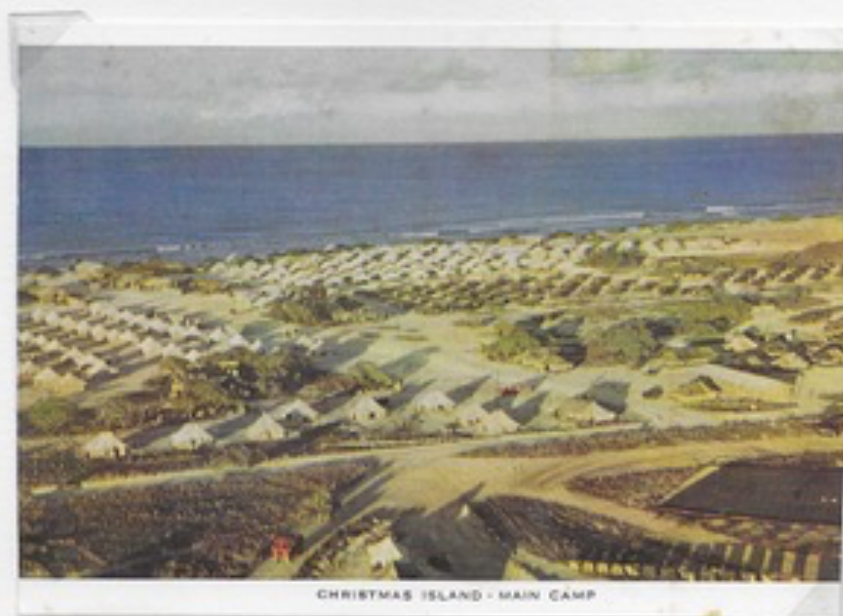


**THE GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS**  
**POSTAL HISTORY CHRISTMAS ISLAND**  
**ATOMIC BOMB TEST OPERATION GRAPPLE**



HMS. Warrior

Used as a support ship from 1956 and a base for helicopters on observation flights carried out after atomic bomb tests.



Military Base Camp

Staff stationed on Christmas Island had the very basic accommodation, no running water, most were billeted in tents with very little to do when not working other than sun bathing and swimming with shark attacks on swimmers who ventured to far out.

## THE GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS

### POSTAL HISTORY

#### CHRISTMAS ISLAND ATOM BOMB TESTS

#### BRITISH FORCES

In March of 1956 the British Government gave the approval to establish an Air Base on Christmas Island, with the code GRAPPLE. In June of 1956 it was announced the real purpose of the base on the island was for the testing of nuclear weapons. Recording stations were also set up on Fanning and Malden Islands. At first none of the islanders were taken off the island, but in 1957 the women and children were evacuated to Fanning Island with the men left behind to help with work on the Island.



BFPO170 Air Mail Letter

British forces based on Christmas Island were given the BFPO number of 170

THE GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS  
 POSTAL HISTORY  
 CHRISTMAS ISLAND .

Registered cover 24th March 1957 to  
 Westcliff-on Sea via Airmail North  
 America. Air Mail.

Has the red boxed  
 registered cancellation.



Back stamped with Honolulu  
 double ring purple cancellation  
 On the 24th March.

No arrival post mark in Westcliff on Sea

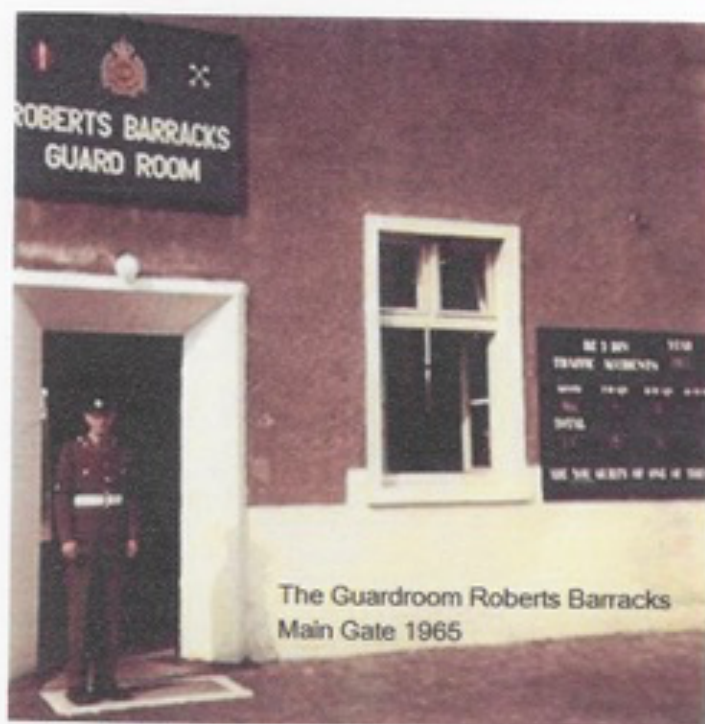


THE GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS  
 POSTAL HISTORY CHRISTMAS ISLAND .  
 ATOMIC BOMB TESTS



OHMS Cover to BFPO 36

Oval Cachet Orderly Room 24th December 1958



Roberts Barracks BFPO36 Larkhill-Salisbury.



**THE GILBERT & ELLICE ISLANDS**

**POSTAL HISTORY    CHRISTMAS ISLAND**

**ATOM BOMB TESTS**

**BRITISH FORCES**

**OPERATION GRAPPLE**



Mr George Cushing  
48 Neville Avenue  
Portchester  
Fareham  
Hampshire  
England. 60

**Illustrated cover showing the island with a bird flying above it with a grapple hook in its claws. The stamp is cancelled BFPO Christmas Island with a single 24mm ring.**

### **Committee Proposals.**

It was agreed that we should do all we can to encourage the membership to stay in contact with each other through these difficult times so Bev will be sending out emails shortly making contact with all members to make sure that all of our contact details for each member are current and up to date.

The club has collected no subscriptions this year and it was decided to have a subs holiday and start again in the Autumn of 2021 when hopefully a more “normal” season can start

Many societies and club are now using video conferencing to continue the activities of their clubs. The committee is planning to hold a regular “zoom” meeting and this will include a short speaker presentation, no more than 12 slides or pictures and an opportunity for us all to share news and just to have a sociable time. The first meeting is planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February at 19:00 pm and will be no more than 40 minutes long with more details to follow.

Any member can do a presentation, no more than 12 pages and I will help with any of the presentation of material by “slides” in the meeting. If you are interested in doing a presentation then please contact me and I will help in the process.

One idea for a future zoom meeting is a “one page” evening where all members put a single sheet/item into the meeting for us all to enjoy and participate. So please start thinking of that single item, I will coordinate getting the pictures organised to make it easier for all to join in.

### **Final Notes:**

Please keep safe and well everyone. A big thank you to Roy for his contribution this time around and if anyone wants to show some of their collection then please get in touch, as I would be pleased to help you include it in a future newsletter. Best wishes to all and to everyone, good health, and a happy New Year.

Any mistakes and errors are all down to me, so as before, my genuine apologies for every one of them! If anyone is receiving the newsletter in error or no longer wishes to receive it please let me know and I will remove you from the circulation list.

Until next time.

Les Ashton-Smith

## P.S.

An intriguing addition to my collection of Chepstow POW mail. This cover was sent on supplied POW stationery from a German prisoner to Bremen, Germany. The return camp address is the Mardy camp, near Abergavenny but the letter has a Bulwark postmark, which is an area of Chepstow, any ideas?

### Chepstow Postmarks (1947)

A German POW letter sent in 1947 from a Welsh POW camp to a then "American zone" in Bremen, Germany. The postal stationery was issued to POW and were sent postage free to families back home. The POW camps in the UK were numbered and this has Camp 118 in a clear purple "postmark". Camp 118 is listed as located in Mardy (Maerdy) near Abergavenny. However, the postmark has a clear "Bulwark" text which is a region of Chepstow. It is noted that the prisoner address is listed as Mardy but the initials P.W.W (Prisoner of War Working) suggest that at this time, after the war had ended, the "prisoners" may well have been working on the surrounding land, providing labour for harvesting and other such community projects. Bulwark had a German POW camp so Mardy may have been the mailing address for prisoners located and working in Bulwark. Contents in German shown overleaf.

FROM.  
MITTENTE.  
ABSENDER.  
NOME

VOR UND ZUNAME

PRIG. DI GUERRA NO.  
GEFANGENENNUMMER

*Which Street 568 117 118 P.W.W. Camp*

*Mardy, Abergavenny/Non. Great Britain.*

PRISONER OF WAR POST.  
SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE.  
KRIEGSFANGENENPOST.

TO  
A  
AN

*Amerikan-Zone*



*Herrn Karl Gregor*

*23.*

*Bremen*

*Herderstrasse 56*

*GERMANY.*